

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

FY2007 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Year of Change and Growth

Since 1926, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) has served the state by providing forest protection and management to landowners. Over the years, we've adapted our services and programs to meet the changing needs of landowners and the landscape. Fiscal Year 2007 was a time of renewal and planned growth, following a long process of reorganization and planning. I'm pleased to share the highlights of this pivotal year in this 2007 Annual Report Executive Summary (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007).

FY07 was a successful and productive year for MFC - a direct result of many hours of planning and discipline. Our new structure allows the MFC to better manage forest resources and meet the needs of customers.

With much needed federal funding, MFC continued to implement our Katrina recovery plan. Our excellent staff and contract foresters conducted extensive inventory, analysis and reforestation of affected counties and improved our preparedness for the future threat of hurricanes.

In FY07, we introduced the Lead Team Concept of management. Each month the team meets to discuss detailed cost accounting, monthly income and expense statements, forecast planning, operating norms and a review of agency objectives. The agency programs have been segmented into two focus areas: Forest Protection/Information and the Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory/Forest Management. The role of the District Foresters was also expanded. The five District Foresters are the critical mass of the agency's leadership team and are responsible for managing almost 90% of the MFC's personnel and other resources. Their responsibilities now include a more active role in the legislative process, and they carry out the mission of our agency through their five administrative districts.

Our Lead Team worked with staff, commissioners and stakeholders to develop and implement a new Strategic Plan for FY 2007-2011. The plan sets aggressive goals for improving forest protection, management and information.

The MFC has expanded its partnerships to more effectively respond to customer needs and protect and manage Mississippi's forestlands. We appreciate our many partners who helped implement programs and provide services highlighted in this summary. FY07 was a successful and productive year for MFC - a direct result of many hours of planning and discipline. Our new structure allows the MFC to better manage forest resources and meet the needs of customers.

I am truly grateful for the guidance of our state leaders, commission, staff, partners and customers in helping develop and implement the new plan and structure. Please contact us if we can assist you in any way.

Charlie Morgan

Charlie Morgan
State Forester



Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory/ Forest Management

MIFI

In 2006, the Mississippi Legislature passed a law that brought the Mississippi Institute of Forest Inventory (MIFI) under the oversight of the MFC. Included in this division is the MFC's Resource Analysis program which coordinates the development, implementation, and management of the agency's geographic information system.

To promote economic development of the state's forest resources, MIFI, in conjunction with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), provides forest resource information and maps. A statewide assessment of forest resources is maintained utilizing satellite imagery to estimate forest removals, regeneration and stages of forest cover.

This past year, MIFI completed a baseline inventory for 60% of Mississippi counties. Twenty additional counties will be completed by May 2008 with the remaining to be complete by May 2009. MIFI also responded to a 1,200% increase in requests for resources analyses for ethanol conversion facilities in 2007.

Forest Management

The MFC offers a variety of forest management services to private landowners and public forestland stewards in the state.

FY07 Statewide Forest Management Accomplishments

Private Lands - Landowners Assisted	15,828
Seedlings Sold	14,157,100
Acres Regenerated or Improved	
Forest Resource Development Program	30,333
Federal Forestry Incentive Programs Assistance	3,770
Public Land Activities	
Timber Sale Receipts	\$9,682,784
Acres Regenerated	6,962
Forest Management	
Plans	2,463
Acres	151,388
Prescribed Burning (Acres)	
Private Lands	10,120
Public Lands	8,169
Total	18,289

Private Lands

MFC provides technical and financial assistance to private nonindustrial forest landowners (PNIFs). Of the state's 19.79 million acres of forestland, 77% belongs to an estimated 350,000 PNIFs with parcels of 10 acres or greater. MFC provides help through programs such as Forest Stewardship, the Forest Resource Development Program, and the new Forest Legacy Program designed to enhance and protect natural resources.

In 2007, the MFC submitted for federal approval the new 2007-2011 Forest Legacy *Assessment Of Need (AON)* that identifies areas in Mississippi where important natural forest communities exist on private lands potentially

Over \$2 million each year is distributed to private forest landowners in Mississippi through Forest Resource Development Program which provides cost sharing for tree planting and forest improvement.

Mississippi Forest Legacy Areas



threatened by conversion to non-forest use. The AON recommends these areas of the state be designated as Forest Legacy Areas so that willing landowners may nominate their property as a possible Forest Legacy Tract.

Public Lands

MFC provides management assistance to agencies with jurisdiction over 500,000 acres of non-federal public forestlands. This program is responsible for the management of two State Forests (Kurtz and Camden); providing technical direction on the management of Sixteenth Section (School Trust) lands; and rendering assistance to the various agencies.

MFC is taking the steps to ensure all School Trust Lands are managed sustainably and best management practices are used. The agency is in the process of completing the following:

- Converting all School Trust land to a statewide GIS-based system.
- Conducting a statewide forest inventory on all School Trust forestland to be completed in FY08.
- Developing a statewide management database system for developing management plans as well as for planning, tracking, monitoring, and reporting forest practices and activities on School Trust forestland.



Forest Health

MFC provides forest pest detection, evaluation and control recommendations for all private and state-owned timberlands and urban areas, and conducts at least one statewide aerial survey each year. Insect and disease spots are ground-checked to determine the exact cause and extent of damage.

Timber damage from forest insects and disease has been very light in FY07 compared to previous years, though the southern pine beetle kills more pine timber in the South than any other forest insect. In 2007, MFC partnered with the MSU Extension Service to produce a pine beetle brochure to hand out at county forestry association and landowner meetings and field days.

The second leading insect to kill pine timber in the South is the *lps* engraver beetle. Drought conditions and stress from hurricane winds have caused the *lps* populations to increase dramatically.

In FY07, a new forest pest was detected in Mississippi, the redhumped caterpillar. Infestations were found along major transportation corridors in the City of Jackson along the Pearl River and in Warren, Jackson, Harrison, Lee, and Tishomingo Counties.

Forest Protection and Information

Fire Services

The MFC protects Mississippi's forestland and uncultivable land from wildfires. As an average, there are about 3,200 wildfires each year in Mississippi burning over 56,000 acres with the leading cause being wood arson.

FY07 Wildfires by Cause

Cause	# Wildfires	Acres Burned
Incendiary	1,809	38,559
Debris Burning	1,567	18,969
Miscellaneous	215	2,436
Re-ignition	176	2,262
Equipment Use	68	658
Lightning	50	729
Smoking	22	196
Railroad	19	348
Children	18	928
Campfire	7	28
Total	3,951	65,113

Hurricane Katrina Recovery Update 2007

The federal government appropriated \$11.8 million in supplemental funding to the MFC to aid in recovery of lost forest resources. Recovery projects include:

- Enhancing wildfire protection and mitigation projects.
- Urban and community recovery grants.
- Reinventory of Sixteenth Section forestlands damaged by Katrina.
- Providing Volunteer Fire Assistance grants and local community Fire Prevention Plans.
- Keeping the public informed of forest health issues.

FY07 Highlights

Fire Equipment: MFC increased capacity for wildfire preparedness by purchasing 34 One-Ton Pumper Units, 21 D-5 Fire Units, and 2 large Mitigation Dozers totaling \$5,171,467.



Urban Forest Recovery: \$1.32 million in 34 grants were awarded to help communities replace tree cover loss and address tree health issues.

Urban Forest Council: UFC established a grant to provide tree nursery assistance for hurricane impacted communities to replant their

urban forest. Over 2,500 trees were containerized by sister cities and delivered to the Coast.

Wildfire Prevention Plans: MFC partnered with Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District to prepare *County Wildfire Prevention Plans*, based on the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment data in the 15 southern most counties. This program involves each volunteer fire department and the county fire/emergency coordinator. A mass media fire campaign accompanied this program that included TV, radio, billboard, and newsprint ads.

Fire Mitigation: The MFC fire crews reached nearly half of the three year goal of 750 miles of permanent firebreaks under the Katrina fire mitigation program.

Communicating

Recovery Success: MFC provided grants to the Mississippi Forestry Association and the Mississippi Urban Forest

Council to promote Katrina success stories for urban and rural forest recovery, as well as host field days to showcase these successes.

Landowner Information: MFC also partnered with MSU Extension Service to reproduce the *Managing the Family Forest* booklet to include all-aged management and longleaf restoration as an option to Katrina damaged stands.

Volunteer Fire Assistance: MFC awarded Volunteer Fire Assistance grants to 60 Volunteer Fire Departments totaling \$626,500.



Members of the Mississippi Forestry Commission (FY07)

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Maben

Larry Homan
Fulton

Donald Simmons, Vice Chairman
Crawford

Allen Jones, Jr.
Lorman

Al Alexander
Wiggins

Glenn Sowell
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The Mississippi Forestry Commission has provided forest protection and forest management to Mississippi landowners since 1926. Learn more at www.mfc.state.ms.us.

The Mississippi Forestry Commission provides equal employment opportunity and services to all individuals regardless of disability, race, age, religion, color, gender, creed, nation origin or political affiliation.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

